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**S**TORNOWAY'S debut album *Beachcomber's Windowsill* is out now, and the band are playing festivals this summer.

They are a four-piece band based in Oxford, comprising Brian Briggs, Jonathan Ouin, Ollie Steadman and Rob Steadman. They were named in the BBC's Sound Of 2010 poll as one of the bands to look out for this year. We caught up with drummer Rob to find out more.

**WHEN DID YOU SIGN TO YOUR RECORD LABEL, 4AD?**

We officially signed with them at a gig we played in Stornoway in Scotland back in April. So it's quite recent, and it's all so exciting. We've got a lot on, with the album, gigs and festivals, but we feel really comfortable.

**HOW LONG AGO WAS THE ALBUM RECORDED? YOU OBVIOUSLY MADE THAT ON YOUR OWN, WITHOUT A RECORD LABEL?**

Yes, all apart from two songs were recorded in our homes, using an eight-track. The recordings go back to before we even formed. Some of the tracks Brian and Jon had from a few years back when they were in uni, recording in their bedrooms. More recently we went in the studio to do two songs.



HEBRIDES OVERTURE: Stornoway

Skye's the limit

pop

andy welch

**WHEN DID THE BAND FORM?**

Brian and Jon were at Oxford University about four or five years ago, and they advertised for a bassist, who was my brother Ollie. That was three or four years ago, and then I joined maybe three-and-a-half years ago, and we've been together ever since.

**HOW OLD ARE YOU?**

I'm 19. I'm on a gap year from uni really, and I'm the baby of the band. Ollie is 22 this year, and Brian and Jon are 30 and 29, so a bit older than me.

**IS IT EASY BEING IN A BAND WITH YOUR BROTHER?**

It is actually, because we've always had a good relationship. No fights or anything like that. Going on tour, we get to know each other even better. Ollie and I have always played music together. We're from South Africa originally

and played music over there when we were a lot younger. It's nice to be now doing it semi-professionally.

**SEMI-PROFESSIONALLY?**

I suppose I say that because I don't know how to judge it and don't want to tempt fate! We've all left jobs or schooling, Ollie has just done his finals. I've deferred my degree for another year. I'm supposed to be going to Birmingham to do environmental sciences, but I think anyone would do the same if they could play music. I can get a degree again, but this is happening now.

**WHEN DID YOU MOVE OVER FROM SOUTH AFRICA? YOU DON'T HAVE THE ACCENT.**

We came over seven-and-a-bit years ago, so I was 13. Our dad got some time off work so we came to see relatives, and then never went back because we loved Oxford so much. I've not been back for about three years.

**WHERE DOES THE FOLK MUSIC INFLUENCE COME FROM IN THE MUSIC?**

Growing up in South Africa, Ollie and I didn't hear any British folk music, but Brian's parents are Irish and he grew up listening to Celtic music. Jon loves 1970s folk stuff, Bert Jansch and things like that, so I think it comes from there. There's a lot of nature in the music too, which is because Brian loves the outdoors, sailing and that sort of thing. A lot of the lyrics mention the sea or have maritime themes.

**AND WHAT WAS IT LIKE WHEN YOU WENT TO SCOTLAND TO PLAY IN STORNOWAY?**

We weren't sure if they'd like us because we'd stolen their town's name, but they're amazing people up there. We loved it up there, there was such a good feeling at the gig we played. We bought everyone at the gig a shot of whisky too, so I think that helped win them over!

albums

duncan seaman

**FLYING LOTUS COSMOGRAMMA**

★★★★☆ Back in the 1990s the record labels Warp and Ninja Tunes released a series of groundbreaking sound collage albums by the likes of Luke Vibert, Amon Tobin, Plaid and The Black Dog.

American producer and laptop musician Steven 'Flying Lotus' Ellison picks up where they left off. His third album *Cosmogramma* takes elements of jazz, hip-hop, R&B, electronica, strings, brass, found sounds and the avant-garde and rolls them all into one – amazingly coherent – whole.

There are guest appearances by Thom Yorke of Radiohead, Laura Darlington and Ravi Coltrane, the saxophone-playing son of John and Alice Coltrane. What makes it so interesting are the endless twists and turns as Ellison searches for a new musical avenue to explore.

WARP

**B.O.B**

THE ADVENTURES OF BOBBY RAY

★★★★☆ Currently riding high in the UK singles charts with *Nothin' On You*, Bobby Ray Simmons is a rapper of the feelgood variety. His debut album is hip-hop at its smoothest,

**FAUST**

FAUST IS LAST

★★★★☆

One of the original krautrock bands, Faust sprang to fame in the UK in 1973 with their intriguing cut-and-paste album *The Faust Tapes*, which Richard Branson's fledgling Virgin Records label released for the bargain sum of 48p. The disc went on to sell more than 100,000 copies but didn't chart because of its low price tag.

Thirty-seven years on founder member Hans Joachim Irmler is still fearlessly experimenting, with new collaborators Lars Paukstat and Steven W Loddell. (Confusingly Irmler's former bandmates



with only predictably potty-mouthed appearances by Eminem and Playboy Tré to upset parents. Kindred spirit Lupe Fiasco puts in an appearance on *Past My Shades* while Hayley Williams of Paramore guests on the catchy *Airplanes*. Simmons doubles up as a silky-voiced singer while samples from Vampire Weekend and Marvin Gaye indicate he has catholic tastes.

ATLANTIC

Zappi Diermaier and Jean-Hervé Pèron have an alternative version of Faust, which recently toured the UK.)

*Faust is Last* is a double album full of their trademark drones, feedback and motorik beats yet it sounds strangely timeless.

*Hit Me's* dirty garage band rumble is particularly effective, as is the primitive techno of *Babylon* and the industrial gloom of *In But Out*. *Day Out* also shows it's possible to write a melancholy piano ballad without a hint of kitsch.

Across an hour-and-a-half, *Faust is Last* is uneasy listening, but the band's refusal to compromise their artistic vision is entirely laudable.

KLANGBAD

**DAN SARTAIN**

DAN SARTAIN LIVES!

★★★★☆

Alabama singer Dan Sartain bears a passing resemblance to the retro schlock film director John Waters. His music harks back to a similar era as Waters' movies, but it's steeped in the greasy rockabilly of Gene Vincent and Gene Summers rather than the beehives and bobby sox pop of *Hairspray* and *Cry-Baby*.

Though his third album doesn't push any envelopes, it's entertaining enough, especially the hip-swivelling *Bohemian Grove* ("Pagan or druid/What are you doin'?") and the primal bass and beat of *Atheist Funeral* ("Don't you talk about God on our wedding day"). Surely Richard Dawkins would approve.

ONE LITTLE INDIAN

**THE MISERABLE RICH OF FLIGHT AND FURY**

★★★★☆

Cellist Will Calderbank and singer James de Malplaquet were once a folktronica duo trading under the appalling name of Grape Authority. Realising they were circling a musical cul-de-sac, they decided to expand their line-up to a quintet in 2007, change the name of their band and write chamber pop songs instead. The fresh approach worked and *Of Flight and Fury* is their second album as The Miserable Rich.

There are strains of Tim Buckley and Robert Plant – at their most folky – in de Malplaquet's voice and echoes of Robert Kirby (Nick Drake, Vashti Bunyan, Robert and Linda Thompson) in the sweetly nostalgic string arrangements. Occasionally their lyrics trip over themselves ("You are tickling me/You are crippling me", "I wanna fade/You've got it made"), but their tunes keep the side up, particularly the shimmering *Pegasus* and the tender ache of *Bye Bye Kitty*.

HUMBLE SOUL

● The Miserable Rich play at The Library in Leeds on June 9.